

Maine History

Volume 28
Number 1 *James G. Blaine, Maine statesman*

Article 3

6-1-1988

Selections from Frank Dickerson's Civil War Letters

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Recommended Citation

Richardson, Lucy. "Selections from Frank Dickerson's Civil War Letters." *Maine History* 28, 1 (1988): 36-53.
<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistoryjournal/vol28/iss1/3>

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SELECTIONS FROM FRANK DICKERSON'S CIVIL WAR LETTERS

The following letters were written during the Civil War by Frank Wilberforce Dickerson, Belfast, Maine.

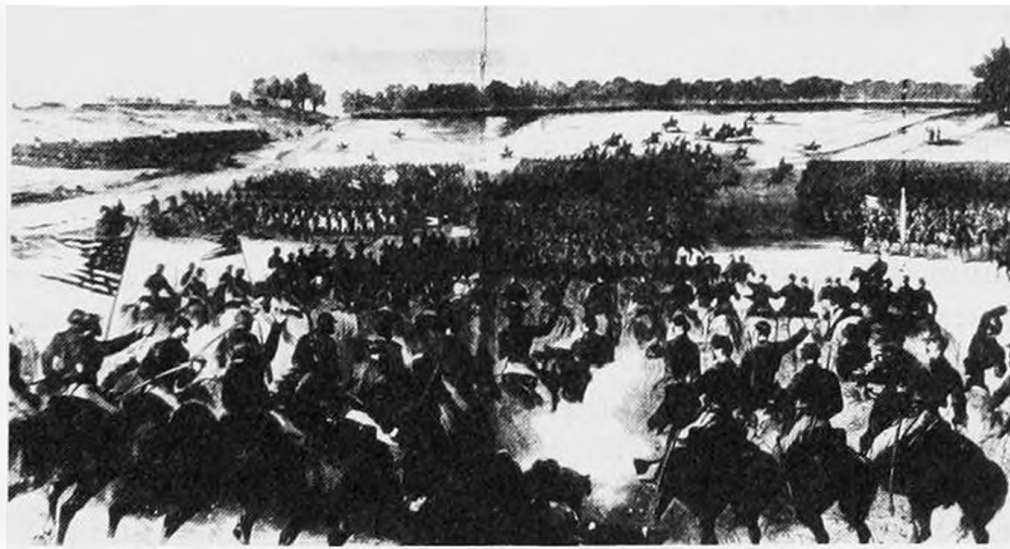
When I was a young girl, my grandmother, Lucy Dickerson Burleigh, told me she remembered the morning the news reached Searsport that Lincoln had been assassinated. I suppose I reacted as if she'd told me she remembered the landing of the Pilgrims!

Grandmother's older half-brother, Frank, fought in the Civil War. She saved, and later gave to me, 77 letters that Lieut. Dickerson had written their father, Johnathan Garland Dickerson, Justice of the Supreme Court of Maine.

When he wrote the letters, Frank was twenty-two years old. His mother, Ellen, died when he was two; when he was fifteen his stepmother, Lydia Jane, died. Three years later Judge Dickerson married Eliza, who is referred to as "Mother" in the letters.

A family bible records that Frank died six weeks after his last letter was written. He was 25 years old. Quoting from a newspaper obituary:

Frank Wilberforce Dickerson, born March 21, 1841; he was in March, 1862, commissioned 2d Lieut. in the 5th U. S. Cavalry, regular army. He participated with distinction in the battle of Antietam and other severe actions that occurred soon after he entered the service. In the first great cavalry fight of the war at Beverly Ford, June 9, 1863, he commanded the squadron which received the first shock of the enemy, and was badly wounded in the head by a minieball. Eager for action he returned to his regiment before his health was sufficiently restored and was presently appointed second in command of General Grant's body guard, and the ranks of Capt. and Major by brevet were conferred on him for meritorious service. When disease rendered him no longer



General Buford's cavalry charging Confederate positions near Beverly Ford on the Rappahannock River. Frank Dickerson, serving with the Army of the Potomac, spent much of the war in campaigns in Northern Virginia. *Harper's Weekly*, 1883.

equal to great exertion, he unwillingly accepted more retired, but responsible, posts of duty, first in Maryland, and afterward at Nashville, Tenn. At length wasted by sickness, he was met on his way home by his father in New York, and died of consumption on board a steamer, in Boston Harbor, February 17, 1866, while en route for Belfast.

Frank is buried in the Grove Street Cemetery, Belfast, Maine. A list of 10 of the 12 battles in which he participated is recorded on his marker.

Lucy (Dickerson Burleigh) Richardson

[On January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. A week later Lieutenant Frank W. Dickerson wrote home:]

Depot for Prisoners of War
Assistant Quartermaster Office
Point Lookout, Md.
January 7th, 1863

Dear Father

I arrived here today with the cavalry command which has been stationed at Leonardtown and vicinity. We are on the eve of making a raid over into Virginia. I expect we shall land in Westmoreland Co. and run the gauntlet of the lower country between the Potomac and Rappahannock, destroying everything as we go, and subsisting on the country — that is if we

CIVIL WAR LETTERS

have the good luck and the opposition is not too heavy for us. We shall take over 150 regular cavalry, which will be under command of Lieut. Mix of the 2nd U. S. Cavalry, and I shall be next in command. The Gunboats will also go up and hover round the Rappahannock, to protect us on that side. I suppose some infantry will accompany us and perhaps a section of artillery. I am well, received a letter from you the other day. My love to all at home, Mother, and Lulu,¹ and accept much yourself from your most affectionate son.

Frank

P.S. I got me one of the "aromatic belts or soldiers life preserver" in Boston and think quite well of it. It is made of flannel inside of which there are placed some aromatic stimulants such as cayenne, etc., it completely protects the stomach, keeping it warm etc. all the time. When you write direct as follows

Averell's Brigade

Army of the Potomac

Washington, D.C.

Write soon. I will write again after I find my reg't.

¹Lulu, Frank's younger half sister, Lucy Dickerson, later Mrs. John M. Burleigh, my Grandmother.

[An official "List of Battles in which Lieut. Frank W. Dickerson of the 5th Cavalry participated records that on September 17, 1862, Frank was in battle at Antietam, "one of the bloodiest single days of the war." The same month Frank fought at Sheppardstown, Maryland, and at Halltown, Virginia. In November, Frank was in combat at Markham Station, Virginia, and at Amesville, Virginia. On December 13, 1862, Lieutenant Dickerson was in the struggle at Fredericksburg.]

H'd Qur's Cav'y Det.

Point Lookout M'd

January 16th, 1863

Dear Father

We returned from our raid last evening having been three days in Va. once more.

We raided through Richmond, Northumberland and Lancaster Countys, captured a large lot of horses, mules, cattle,

sheep etc. (besides destroying an extensive tannery) a large quantity of pork intended for the rebel army. The raid was successful, only losing one man. The country we travelled over was very poor indeed, scarcely enough to subsist the inhabitants. Will send you some more particulars at another time.

In haste,

Camp 5th U. S. Cavalry
Near Potomac Creek
Station Jan. 17 '63 (1863)

Dear Father

I have just returned from a 3 days tour of picket duty. I had with me 75 men and two officers. An immediate move is to be made by the Army of the Potomac. I understand that the whole army is under marching orders. We have orders to be in readiness to move tomorrow at 1 o'clock p.m. The Potomac trains have moved up the river several miles above Fredericksburg.

Should the army attempt to cross the river again and move on to Richmond by the way of Fredericksburg I tremble for the result. I have no confidence in the move. All our officers feel the same as I do about it that the army never can make a successful attack with the rebel army in the position it now is. I fear that if we do make another attack on the rebel lines while they are in their present position, that we shall meet with a stunning overwhelming defeat, one from which we cannot recoil and we would be driven totally routed back into the Rappahannock. — God grant that it may not be as I predict. But perhaps I may be mistaken in the movement which is soon to be made, it may be (for aught I really know) a retrograde movement. — This army, in my opinion, must change its base — cannot be successful from its present one. The army has confidence that it can. —

Strange as it may seem to you I am at present in charge of the reg't. All the officers that are my seniors in rank that have been with the reg't for some time past are away on short leaves of absence. It is a fearful responsibility (for so young an officer and for one who has had so little experience) and it rests heavily on my shoulders, I almost shrink from it when I think of it, but

have made up my mind to assume it, to look boldly in the face of all the difficulties which surround me in my present position, and if I am called into action while in command, trusting in God for help and protection, I shall do my duty to the best of my ability. Our reg't now numbers, I think, "present for duty," between 6 and 7 hundred men, we, having received two days ago, 225 recruits fully armed and equipped. — I feel that I am not competent to take command of so many men, but I shall have some sterling officers with me (old soldiers) (who will all lend a willing hand) and I hope for the best ...

Affectionate son,

Januy. 23rd 1863

Dear Father

The movement of the army of the Potomac has, as I anticipated it would, proved a miserable failure. It is not the fault perhaps of the Gen'l Comd'g. The army is a dead lock. It is stuck in the mud near the ford where it was intended to cross. They cannot cross, neither can they move back, the roads are in such a condition that wagons cannot carry supplies to them, neither can the artillery return to the R.R. for the same reason. Last night our whole brigade was out carrying rations and forage to the troops. The wagons not being able to get to the army, the cavalry had to be ordered out to carry rations and forage to them on their horse's backs. I went out last night in command of our reg't and was engaged in carrying supplies to the front from 5 o'clock p.m. till 5 o'clock a.m., in the saddle all night long, and on strange roads, dark as Egypt. — and up to the horses knees in mud. — We have a hard time of it I assure you. — The troops were grateful to us for bringing them rations. — This failure will demoralize the army to a fearful extent, it must be the means of an immediate change of base. — I trust the spirit of this army is not wholly crushed. It is reported that Gen'l Lee sent word down to the ford yesterday that he would send across a fatigue party to help us lay our pontoons if we wished it, that he was prepared to give us a welcome reception whenever we did get across.

[War, or A Sunday Afternoon Outing?]

Camp 5th Cavl.
Camp Buford, Md.
Oct 2nd, 1863

Dear Father,

We still **hold** this place, and if the government will consent I think we can **hold it all winter**.

Last Wednesday our reg't, that is the officers, gave Gen'l Stoneman and wife a reception at our camp. We had the camp fixed up elegantly with evergreens, cedars etc., so that it looked like a garden; I have never seen the camp look so well before — We had an excellent cold dinner, gotten up by a celebrated caterer in Washington, which we sat down to about 5 o'clock. Several of the officers had their wives present. Mrs. Capt. Mason, Mrs. Dr. Porter, Mrs. Sweetman, and Mrs. Paden.

Mrs. Mason and Mrs. Porter are boarding at a house about a mile from our camp

Leonardtown is quite a little place, the shire town of St. Mary's County, and the people although all secesh¹ are very hospitable and polite to us.

Last evening I was invited out to partake of terrapin, wild duck, and oyster which was truly elegant. I have invitations out to dine and tea every day. Politics is a subject which we never discuss as everyone knows what my sentiments are (my uniform showing if nothing else) and I know theirs — I have 110 men under my command at or near the vicinity of this town. I have squads out all the time day and night scouting around looking after blockade runners who infest this country. — and while the command has been here they have made many important captures

As ever Your Most Affectionate

¹"secesh" was short for secessionist.

Head Qur's Cav'l
Point Lookout, Md
Nov. 13th, 1863

Dear Father,

Last week I was away with my command all the week, superintending the election. I had some of my men at each

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voting district in this county and the people agree in saying there never was a more peaceable or quiet election. I arrested one old aristocrat at the polls, for uttering treasonable sentiments, and that too before he had voted. He was very much frightened but I told him he must be more careful in the future and not allow officers of the army to overhear him. — I sent him down to Leonardtown about ten miles from where I was, and turned him over to the tender mercies of the Provost Marshall. Aside from this there were no other disturbances and this is the strongest secession county in the state. —

The other night 5 rebel prisoners escaped from the prisoners camp. I went immediately after them with 10 men, shot two of them, and captured the whole 5 again. — There are now here between 11 and 12,000 rebel prisoners of war, which are guarded by a mere handful of men as it were, only two small regt's of infantry numbering perhaps to say the most 500 men in both regt's. — I think I am more comfortably situated now than I have been at any time before since I entered the army. — My camp is in the Pines on the Point (a narrow neck or tongue of land) with the Potomac River on one side of me and the broad Chesapeake Bay on the other, both in full view and not 800 yds. apart — My men have nice large Scoble tents with stoves, plenty to eat and not much (comparatively) to do, also plenty of forage for the horses.

It is sometimes a little lonesome here. I am the only regular officer on this Point, though I have met several fine gentlemen among volunteers here. Many officers have their wives and daughters here, and friends both ladies and gentlemen are constantly coming to visit them, — so much social intercourse makes it quite pleasant, I can hardly realize it is soldiering, it reminds me of what it must be in peacetimes.

Your most aff son,

[As a Maine Boy Saw It!]

Leonardtown, Md.

February 14th, 1864

Dear Father

We have not received any order to leave this place yet, to go once more into the wilds of Virginia, and take part in another

hard and muddy Spring campaign with the Army of the Potomac. We have monumental expectations of forced marches again, reconnaissances in the mud, sleeping on the ground, with the broad canopy of the heavens above us for our mantle, a saddle for a pillow, and nothing but a "hardtack" and a piece of salt pork to alleviate our hunger.

The secessionists are training with rage, because General Butler is taking all their negroes away from them. An infantry officer has been here recruiting and also a cavalry officer, and both together they have taken away large numbers from the Secessionists. The negroes have the war fever now. The strong, and nearly all the able bodied ones will go into the army, and the white people who have always lived upon their labor begin to look about themselves to see how they are going to live without them. Men who have never done a day's work, will have to work this Spring, or else come to poverty. Women who have always lived in their sitting rooms and parlors in idleness will have to go into their kitchens and work like our Northern ladies do. Great will be the fall thereof, but words will certainly prove true, for the women servants as well as the men are all leaving. It will be two years before they can recover from the ruin and decay which slavery has brought upon them. Eventually they will be much better off for slavery's abolishment.

Capt. Ash of my regiment and several new Com. officers and privates were wounded in the late reconnaissance of the Army of the Potomac, as well as several privates killed. This is the second time Capt. Ash has been wounded, the first time receiving five different wounds.

Your most affectionate son.

[Grant halts prisoner exchange, increasing the Confederate manpower shortage.]

Head Qurs Cav'l Det
District St. Mary's
Leonardtown, Md.
May 3rd, 1864

Dear Father

We have been considerably alarmed here lately at reports and rumors, which have been in circulation here to the effect

that a large force of the rebels is on the opposite side of the Potomac, where they have collected a large number of small boats in which they intend to cross the river and make a raid on this place and Point Lookout, with the express intent of liberating their men (new prisoners of war) at the latter place. It is a daring scheme and one which seems hardly inditible, still it might be attempted, but in my opinion with small prospects of success. — That they **could** come over in that way, in considerable force, is not to be doubted much, but the idea of their being able to get back themselves, or that they could get any plunder, or their prisoners back (even in the event of their releasing them) seems to me to be an impossibility. — To affect such an object successfully they must have a “Ram” to destroy our gunboats stationed around and in the vicinity of Pt. Lookout, together with one or two transports to carry away their released soldiers and their booty which would be very large, should they take the Point. — But this they are not going to attempt at a risk followed by such consequences as it inevitably would be, especially at a time when all of their army in Virginia is watching the movements of Grant. — However, should they attempt such a foolhardy movement, we have made arrangements to give them a fitting reception. — The Point is strongly guarded with troops and defended by stockades, etc. which they would first have to break through, and we have scouts and detached parties throughout all parts who are on the alert and would no doubt have ample opportunity to give us timely warning. Within the last two days, we have scouted through the whole country. I was out with one party all Sunday night, and all day Monday. — This was made necessary by the report that Gen’l Fitzhugh Lee had several officers over here in citizens dress, making observations, and arrangements for the portended movement. I did not, neither did any of the other parties that were out, discover anything to substantiate that report. — We had every arrangement made on Sunday night to burn our camp and all our Ordinance, Quartermaster and Commissary stores in case they should come in such force as to prevent our being able to defend it hold it A rocket thrown up from this

place would bring two or three gunboats up to the mouth of-head-of the bay (Potomac) and then "Mr. Johnny" you can bid farewell to Dixie for some time. I have written considerable on this subject as it is one which has been the all absorbing subject of discussion and conversation both here and at Point Lookout for sometime past, and more especially at Point Lookout where they have been **stampeded** several nights lately by false alarms. — It has also caused our cavalry a deal of extra hard work for a week past.

As ever affectionately your son,

[Illness was the common enemy to both sides. The following comments regarding health are extrapolated from several letters.]

Leonardtown, Md

March 30, 1864

Dear Father,

I have been sick nearly all month. I was so as to be about while at the Point, though really was not able. It is my old complaint again, diarrhea, even worse than when I was on the Peninsula, as it was attended by cold and fever. I have lived in a tent, and wasn't much protected from the inclemency of the weathr. I am getting well now however but am still weak.

We have the most disagreeable weather. Constant rains, snow storms etc.

Leonardtown, Md

June 26th, 1864

Dear Father,

I have applied for a leave of absence of 30 days on account of my health not being very good.

Though not able to be about, most of the time I am on duty. Still I feel miserable all of the time. I do not improve as I ought to after a sickness.

We are having the hottest weather I have ever experienced. Completely melting and enervating. —

Hope I shall see you in the course of a fortnight or three weeks.

As ever Affect.

Hammond Gen'l Hospital

July 14, 1864

Dear Father

I am at present in this hospital, anxiously and hopefully awaiting the return of my application for leave of absence. You must not have too strong hopes of my coming home as I have little faith in my application being approved. If unsuccessful, why I must do the best I can here.

The days pass very slowly here.

Affectionately your son,

[Frank was granted sick leave to return home to Maine in August. Letters refer to stops in Baltimore, New York, The American House in Boston, Portland and then home to Belfast. In the next letter Lt. Dickerson is returning to duty in Virginia.]

City Point, Va

Oct. 1st, 1864

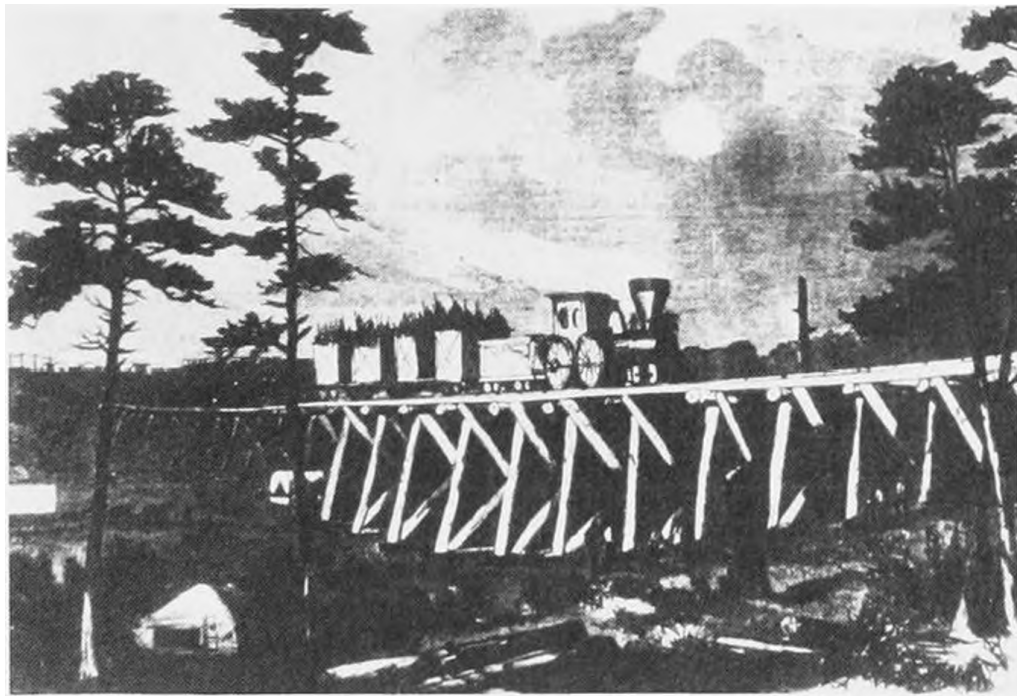
Dear Father

I arrived at Head Quarters Armies of the U. S. on the evening of the 29th. Our tents are all floored as are also those of the men. We have a house made of boards for mess quarters. Our own H'd Qurs. are about as far from Gen'l Grant's as from our house to Mr. Twimbel's.

The evening I arrived the Gen'l was up the river superintending the late flight of General Butler's army. He went up and came back on a steamer. We could hear commanding at times the musketry very distinctly. And an officer who has just left my tent thinks Richmond will be ours in a fortnight.¹ Gen'l Meade's H'd Qurs. are about 8 miles from here.

¹The Confederate government did not flee from Richmond until after April 1865.

General Grant's staff is small, only 7 or 8 officers, while General Meade has nearly 50. Head Qurs does not occupy more than a dozen tents and has only 14 wagons for transportation. General Meade's Head Qurs train consists of 120 wagons. General Grant lives in a larger hospital tent in the same line with his staff and also messes with them.



A scene near Petersburg along the Federal City Point and Petersburg Railroad. *Harper's Weekly*, 1861.

It is quiet here indeed and you would scarcely imagine that here is where all the plans for the movements, confrontations and operations of our army first emanate. Down by the river all is business, noise, bustle, life and confusion. This is the great base of supplies for the army, immense store houses, wharfs and piers extend along the bank for an incredible distance all connected with each other. The wharves are lined with steamers and barges, and sailing vessels unloading every conceivable kind of stores, supplies, equipments, and munitions of war. The river itself is dotted with transports and steamers, continually passing to and fro, and there would seem to be no end to the immense amount of business transacted, and yet the beauty of all is the method and system with which it is all done. Every Department has its wharves, its store houses, its guards, its decks and its employees. — On the land behind, close to the wharf, is the City Point and Petersburg R.R. by which all those supplies are carried up to the Army of the Potomac — trains running day and night and the shrill whistle and the ringing of the bells is incessant. Settlers, squatters, and vendors of almost

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anything, have lined the road along the R.R. and wharves with their huts, shanties and tents. — Not many roads back of all this, but many feet higher, (and though close by, yet out of sight) on a long level lawn well interspersed with trees with a view for miles both up and down the river, lays the camp of the 5th Cavl and 4th Infantry, Gen'l Grant's old regiment which does guard duty for our Hd. Qurs.

In all probability a great battle will be fought within the next ten days, perhaps it will commence before you receive this letter. Gen'ls Meade and Butler have been here all this afternoon in consultation with General Grant. Every indication points to an early move.

I have the pleasure to state that Gen'l Grant has selected from out of all the cavalry in the army, two companies of the 5th Maine Cavalry for his personal body guard.

I am your most aff. son

[Frank Would Go To The Polls and Vote for Lincoln]

Baltimore, Md

October 31st, 1864

Dear Father

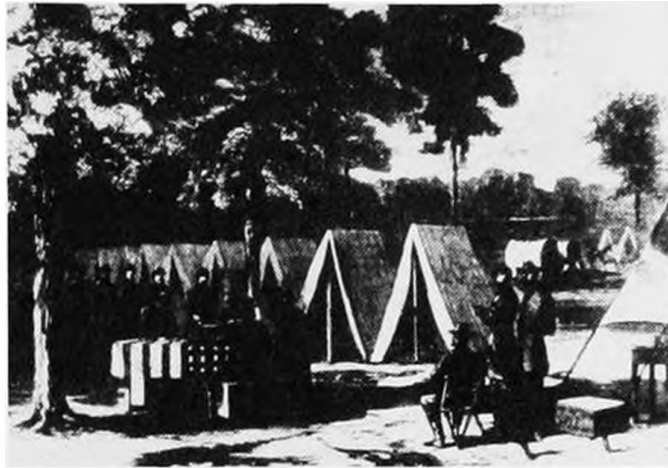
The election is the all engrossing subject of conversation now. McClellan won't get even a respectable vote.

The army has no desire to see the destiny of the country in the hands of anyone under whom the independence of the South would soon be recognized. We wish to see the rebellion crushed out, and accordingly will vote for Lincoln. I do not know what your political principles are, but if there should be any chance for me to vote in this city or in Washington with any Maine soldiers I shall go to the polls and vote for Lincoln.

[Frank has a word with Father!]

Dear Father

What think you of the election results? I thank God for the blow it has dealt the rebels. You have eschewed politics so I refrain from further comment. I was not surprised to learn that



Soldiers voting in
the 1864 presiden-
tial elections, Army
of the James.
Harper's Weekly,
1861.

you were away from home on election day. It was rather unfortunate that it should happen so, as people might consider it intentional.

I had no opportunity offered me to vote, if I had I should have availed myself of the privilege to give "old Abe" my vote. He is not a man of my choice by any means, still he was the only choice that all good and loyal men had. The war will now be carried on with more vigor than ever. I see no cause for despair or lamentation.

Your Aff. son

Baltimore, Md.
Nov. 25th, 1864

Dear Father,

I shall not in all probability be able to go back to the field this winter.

Thanksgiving day passed off very quietly with me in the city. The dinner that I partook of though very excellent, didn't taste like the good old fashioned Searsport Thanksgiving dinners of former years. The last three of which I have been unfortunate enough to miss.

I think this war must have fearfully demoralized Belfast from all accounts, at least when peaceable citizens are obliged to keep revolvers for self protection, a thing unheard of in my day at home. I think your revolver is the first war like weapon ever introduced by you into the house. I trust you may never have occasion to use it; once my health is restored I will do all the fighting for the family that is necessary to be done. The

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situation of affairs now looks favorable to me. Look out for heavy fighting in the Potomac around the year end. The sixth corps has returned to the Army of the Potomac

Affecy your son

[Frank wrote in January: "I have made up my mind not to give way and go to bed entirely as long as I can walk. I am taking Cod Liver Oil." When Frank was at an Officer's Hospital in Annapolis, Md., he received orders for "light duty" in Madison, Wisconsin.]

Madison, Wisconsin

Feb. 12, 1865

Dear Father,

It looks to me as if Maine was behind hand on the coming draft. Ansel White seems to be one of the young men of Belfast who has achieved reputation and glory as a soldier. Belfast ought to be proud of such a soldier. He ought to have more rank.

For my part I pray I may recover to health and return to the field.

Affectionately your son

[The Confederate government flees Richmond.]

Madison, Wis.

April 10, 1865

Dear Father

I congratulate you on the recent successes of the Union Armies as manifested in the fall of Richmond and the surrender of the rebel army of "Northern Virginia." — On receipt of the news of the fall of Richmond, the people of the city became wild with joy and excitement, stores and offices were closed all business suspended, salutes, marching bands playing at the head of impromptu processions, speeches made and illuminations and whiskey wound up the evening entertainments. — It seemed almost impossible for many to throw off the excessive exuberance of their joy. — We received the news of the sur-



Lee's army surrenders arms, Burkesville Station, 1865. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 1865.

rendr of the "Army of Northern Virginia" about ten o'clock last night, a midnight salute was fired, bonfires illuminated the streets, and the noise of cheering resounded from all parts of the city, the whole city was alive with excitement in 1-2 an hour after the receipt of the news. Today we are comfortably quiet. I consider the terms of surrendr proposed by Grant as magnanimous in the extreme and very respectable for Lee to accept. — Praise God that the war is virtually ended!! —

Affcy Your Son

April 14, 1865

[John Wilkes Booth shoots Lincoln at Ford's Theatre in Washington, and Lewis Paine wounds Secretary of State Seward.]

Madison, Wis.

April 16th, 1865

Dear Father

You have doubtless ere this heard of the horrible assassination of our late beloved President Abraham Lincoln and of the attempted murder of our able Secretary of State, Mr. Seward. History furnished no parallel for the atrocity of these deeds. President Lincoln was stricken down while in the height of glory, popularity, and personal happiness, his work was

nearly completed. Would to God he had been able to finish it and been spared to complete his remaining days in quiet and peace, — Enjoying the love and respect of the American people. But an all wise Providence ruled otherwise, how true the lines “In the midst of life we are the death.” The country was not prepared for the suddenness of this shock, to lose our President, at a time when rays of peace were commencing to dawn upon us and the prospects of happily settling our national difficulties was so apparent, I fear it is an irreparable loss to the country, and in the event of Mr. Seward’s death, who can fill his place? I know of no one, but we must hope for the best. This country is passing through an awful ordeal, yet my faith that it will come out triumphantly in the end is still unshaken. Let the people cast aside all personal prejudices they may have against Andrew Johnson and give to him and the armies of the United States their heartiest support, and we will soon wind up this rebellion and show to the world that the destinies of this country are not bound up in the life of one man (even though he may be head of the land) and that his death cannot paralyze the arm of the government or arrest the progress of its attempts to maintain its organization. President Johnson has always proved himself to be the right man for “emergencies” if he did get drunk on his Inauguration Day (which I regard more of an accident than anything else) for which considering all circumstances a great allowance ought to be made, and I have faith that he will be fully equal to the trust and responsibility now imposed on him.

I regret to say, that with the murderer of President Lincoln I had a slight acquaintance. He boarded at the same house in Baltimore (“Barnums”) that I did when I was there last fall under medical treatment. I used to see him nearly every day, and was rather prepossessed, than otherwise, with his appearance. He was very intelligent, well educated and informed, possessing a fine looking exterior, to which he added polite and courteous demeanor, which attracted people toward him and gained him much personal popularity. I should judge him to be about 30 years of age not over that. I have conversed with him

frequently both before and after presidential election, and though I knew him to be an opponent of the administration, I never knew him to express any very decided sentiments of partiality towards any party or to utter one breath of disloyalty against the government. He might have been deterred from expressing himself fully to me on account of my being an officer (towards whom people in Baltimore are very careful what they say) for fear I would have him arrested. In my slight acquaintance with him, I never considered him a politician at all, or even particularly interested in national affairs. He was engaged when I knew him in "Oil Speculations" in Pennsylvania, and was reported to have been very successful, making quite a fortune. He is the last man I should ever think of to commit such a deed, his very looks would belie the fact, — And I yet can scarcely realize that it is the same man. He associated with some of the strongest union men in the city of Baltimore. What motives could actuate him to the committal of such an atrocious and fiendish cause I cannot divine or imagine. — Justice is in his track and will follow him to the gallows. —

Love to Mother and Lulu —

Aff'y Your Son

May 10, 1865

[Frank continued to write home from October through December 1865. There were several noteworthy items, such as a fascinating description of a visit by General Sherman to Frank's Headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin. Frank began to mention more frequently his failing health. He was relieved from duty in November. He commented:

"I am sorry my health does not improve. At the earliest opening of Spring I shall come home and we can consult about the future. It will be impossible for me to remain in the army on account solely of poor health.

I hope for the time to come when I shall see you all again but endeavor to wait patiently believing it is for the best."]